

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An organic contaminant molecule sensor for use in a ~~low oxygen concentration monitored process~~ environment having a low oxygen concentration, the sensor comprising:

an electrochemical cell comprising:

a solid state oxygen anion conductor in which oxygen anion conduction occurs at or above a critical temperature T_e ; ;

a measurement electrode formed on a first surface of the anion conductor for exposure to the monitored environment, the measurement electrode comprising a material for catalysing catalyzing the dissociative adsorption dehydrogenation of the an organic contaminant molecule wherein at temperatures below the critical temperature, organic contaminant molecules are adsorbed onto and dehydrogenated at the surface of the material of the measurement electrode to form a carbonaceous deposit on the surface of the material of the measurement electrode; and

a reference electrode formed on a second surface of the anion conductor for exposure to a reference environment, the reference electrode comprising a material for catalysing catalyzing the dissociation of oxygen to oxygen anions; means

a heater for controlling and monitoring the temperature of the electrochemical cell; and a current source means for controlling the electrical current flowing between the reference electrode and the measurement electrodes, wherein whereby at temperatures below T_e , organic contaminant molecules are adsorbed onto and dissociated at the surface of the measurement electrode leading to the build up of carbonaceous deposits at the surface thereof, and at temperatures above T_e the critical temperature, an electrical current is passed between the reference electrode and the measurement electrode thereby to control the number of oxygen anions passing from the reference electrode to the measurement electrode to oxidise oxidize the carbonaceous deposits formed at the surface thereof and the formation of carbon dioxide.

2. (currently amended) The A-sensor according to Claim 1, wherein the measurement electrode is coated with or formed from material comprises a metal selected from the group comprising of metals consisting of rhenium, osmium, iridium, ruthenium, rhodium, platinum and palladium and alloys thereof.
3. (currently amended) TheA sensor according to Claim 2, wherein the alloys include one or more an elements selected from the group of elements consisting of silver, gold and copper.
4. (cancelled)
5. (currently amended) TheA sensor according to Claim 4, wherein the reference electrode is formed from platinum, palladium or othercomprises a metal capable toof dissociatively adsorbdisassociating oxygen or any alloy thereof.
6. (currently amended) TheA sensor according to any preceding eClaim 1, wherein the solid state oxygen anion conductor is selected from the group of conductors consisting of gadolinium doped ceria and yttria stabilised stabilized zirconia.
7. (currently amended) TheA sensor according to any preceding eClaim 1, comprising a counter electrode positioned adjacent to the reference electrode.
8. (currently amended) TheA sensor according to Claim 7, wherein the counter electrode is formed from platinum, palladium or othercomprises a metal capable to_of dissociatively disassociating adsorb oxygen.
9. (currently amended) TheA sensor according to any preceding eClaim 1, comprising a reference environment wherein the reference environment is having a gaseous source of oxygen at atmospheric pressure, preferably atmospheric air.
10. (currently amended) TheA sensor according to any of Claims 1 to 8, wherein the reference environment comprises a solid-state source of oxygen.

11. (currently amended) TheA sensor according to Claim 10, wherein the solid state source of oxygen is selected fromcomprises a metal/metal oxide couple (optionally Cu/Cu₂O or Pd/PdO), or a metal oxide/metal oxide couple (optionally Cr₂O₃/CuO).

12. (currently amended) TheA sensor according to any precedingClaim 1, wherein the heater further includes a thermocouple assembly the means for controlling or monitoring the temperature of the cell comprises a heater and thermocouple arrangement.

13. (currently amended) TheA sensor according to any precedingClaim 1, further including means for providing measuring a potential across the sensor.

14. (currently amended) Use of aThe sensor according to any precedingclaim Claim 13 wherein the sensor for monitoring the levels of trace organic contaminants in a low oxygen concentration monitored process environment.

15. (currently amended) A method of monitoring the levels of trace organic contaminants in a monitoredprocess environment, the method comprising the steps of:

providing an electrochemical sensor comprising a solid state oxygen anion conductor in which oxygen anion conduction occurs at or above a critical temperature T_e , a measurement electrode formed on a first surface of the conductor for exposure to the monitored process environment, the measurement electrode comprising a material for catalysing the dissociative adsorption dehydrogenation of the trace organic contaminants molecule, and a reference electrode formed on a second surface of the conductor for exposure to a reference environment, the reference electrode comprising a material for catalysing the dissociation of oxygen to oxygen anions;

exposing the measurement electrode at a sensor temperature T_{ads} to the monitored process environment for a time t_{ads} to cause one or more of the trace organic contaminants species to be adsorbed onto and dehydrogenate at the surface of the measurement electrode thereby leading to the build up of a carbonaceous deposit at the surface thereof of the measurement electrode;

raising the temperature of the electrochemical sensor to a value T_{tit} above the critical temperature T_e of the solid state oxygen anion conductor and passing a current I_p between the

reference electrode and the measurement electrode for a time t_p taken sufficient for the potential difference across the electrochemical sensor to reach a constant value determined by the equilibrium between the flux of oxygen anions arriving at the measurement electrode surface and the rate of desorption of oxygen gas from the reference electrode surface; and

determining, from the a total charge ($I_p t_p$) passed through the electrochemical sensor at temperature T_{tit} , the amount of carbonaceous deposits present at the surface of the measurement electrode and therefore the concentration of trace organic contaminants species present in the process environment.

16. (currently amended) The A method according to Claim 15, wherein, further comprising subsequent to the adsorption step, the sensor is heated the step of raising the temperature of the electrochemical sensor to a temperature intermediate between T_{ads} and T_{tit} prior to the step of raising the temperature of the electrochemical sensor to T_{tit} to facilitate the complete conversion of any uncracked hydrocarbon contaminant to a carbonaceous deposit on the surface of the measurement electrode, and thereafter the temperature of the sensor is raised to T_{tit} .

17. (currently amended) The A method according to Claim 15 or Claim 16, wherein T_{ads} is in the range from 20 to 150°C.

18. (currently amended) The A method according to any of Claims 15 to 17, wherein t_{ads} is in the range from 102 to 105 seconds.

19. (currently amended) The A method according to Claim 18, wherein t_{ads} is of the order of about 104 seconds.

20. (currently amended) The A method according to any of Claims 15 to 19, wherein T_{tit} is in the range from 300 to 600°C.

21. (currently amended) The A method according to any of Claims 15 to 20, wherein I_p is in the range from 10nA to 100uA.

22. (currently amended) The A method according to any of Claims 15 to 21, wherein the electrochemical sensor is provided with ~~comprises~~ a counter electrode positioned adjacent to the reference electrode.

23. (currently amended) The A method according to any of Claims 15 to 22, wherein the reference environment is ~~comprises~~ a gaseous source of oxygen at atmospheric pressure, preferably atmospheric air.

24. (currently amended) The A method according to any of Claims 15 to 22, wherein the reference environment comprises a solid-state source of oxygen.

25. (currently amended) The A method according to Claim 24 wherein the solid state source of oxygen is ~~comprises~~ selected from a metal/metal oxide couple compound (optionally Cu/Cu₂O or Pd/PdO), or a metal oxide/metal oxide couple (optionally Cu₂O/ CuO) compound.

26. (currently amended) The A method according to any of Claims 15 to 25, wherein comprising the step of applying a potential V_i is applied across the electrochemical sensor.

27. (new) The sensor according to Claim 12 further including a device for measuring a potential across the sensor.

28. (new) The sensor according to Claim 27 wherein the sensor monitors the levels of trace organic contaminants in a low oxygen concentration monitored process environment.

29. (new) The sensor according to Claim 12 wherein the measurement electrode comprises a metal selected from the group of metals consisting of rhenium, osmium, iridium, ruthenium, rhodium, platinum and palladium and alloys thereof.

30. (new) The sensor according to Claim 29 wherein the alloys include an element selected from the group of elements consisting of silver, gold and copper.

31. (new) The sensor according to Claim 7 wherein the heater further includes a thermocouple assembly.

32. (new) The sensor according Claim 31 further including means for measuring a potential across the sensor.
33. (new) The sensor according to Claim 32 wherein the sensor monitors the levels of trace organic contaminants in a low oxygen concentration monitored process environment.
34. (new) The sensor according to Claim 33 wherein the reference electrode comprises platinum, palladium or other metal capable of dissociating oxygen.
35. (new) The sensor according to Claim 7 wherein the measurement electrode comprises a metal selected from the group of metals consisting of rhenium, osmium, iridium, ruthenium, rhodium, platinum and palladium and alloys thereof.
36. (new) The sensor according to Claim 35 wherein the alloys include an element selected from the group of elements consisting of silver, gold and copper.
37. (new) The sensor according to Claim 13 wherein the measurement electrode comprises a metal selected from the group of metals consisting of rhenium, osmium, iridium, ruthenium, rhodium, platinum and palladium and alloys thereof.
38. (new) The sensor according to Claim 37 wherein the alloys include an element selected from the group of elements consisting of silver, gold and copper.
39. (new) The sensor according to Claim 38 wherein the reference electrode comprises a catalyst for the dissociation of oxygen.
40. (new) The sensor according to Claim 39 wherein the reference electrode comprises a metal capable of dissociating oxygen.
41. (new) The sensor according to Claim 13 wherein the solid state oxygen anion conductor is selected from the group of conductors consisting of gadolinium doped ceria and yttria stabilized zirconia.

42. (new) The sensor according to Claim 13 comprising a reference environment having a gaseous source of oxygen at atmospheric pressure.

43. (new) The sensor according to Claim 13 wherein the reference environment comprises a solid state source of oxygen.

44. (new) The sensor according to Claim 43 wherein the solid state source of oxygen comprises a metal/metal oxide compound.

45. (new) The sensor according to Claim 5 wherein the metal capable of dissociating oxygen is selected from the group of metals consisting of platinum and palladium.

46. (new) The sensor according to Claim 8 wherein the metal capable of dissociating oxygen is selected from the group of metals consisting of platinum and palladium.

47. (new) A sensor according to Claim 10 wherein the solid state source comprises a metal oxide/metal oxide compound.

48. (new) The sensor according to Claim 40 wherein the metal capable of dissociating oxygen is selected from the group of metals consisting of palladium and platinum.

49. (new) The sensor according to Claim 43 wherein the solid state source of oxygen comprises a metal oxide/metal oxide compound.